

Statement by Edward J. Markey (D-MA)
Bipartisan Task Force on Nonproliferation Briefing
October 16, 2001

Good afternoon. I'd like to begin by thanking Dr. Alibek for coming to address the Bipartisan Nonproliferation Task Force today on a subject of great concern to all Americans.

The tragic events of September 11th shook our country to its core and catapulted us into a new reality where an attack against Americans on American soil is no longer unthinkable. These attacks are now much more than intriguing plots in action-packed movies or suspense novels. Americans now recognize that the threat of an attack using a biological, chemical, and/or conventional weapon is all too real. An attack of this nature threatens to put our public health system into serious jeopardy. We must work to shore up our emergency and medical professionals to cope with this new risk. Americans are also demonstrating, however, an absolute refusal to be paralyzed by fear of these attacks. Instead, we are witnessing a steely resolve from coast to coast to recognize the various threats and to confront them head-on. Let me say a few words about the Bipartisan Task Force on Nonproliferation, which sponsored this briefing today. My esteemed colleague, Mr. Shays, and I formed the Task Force in 1997 to provide a forum for the discussion of nonproliferation issues in the post-Cold War world. The inaugural meeting of the task force occurred with an address to a standing-room-only audience by the Honorable Mikhail Gorbachev, former President of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. Since then, we have used the Task Force as a vehicle to bring information about preventing, monitoring, and detecting the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction ALL weapons of mass destruction, be they nuclear, chemical or biological to our colleagues in the Congress.

Now, I am very pleased to introduce our speaker today. Dr. Kenneth Alibek, a Vice President of Hadron, Inc. and President of its Advanced Biosystems, Inc. subsidiary, leads the development of medical and scientific research programs in biological weapons defense and in treatment and prevention of infectious diseases. Dr. Alibek holds M.D., Ph.D. and D.Sc. degrees.

Dr. Alibek served as First Deputy Chief of the civilian branch of the Former Soviet Union's offensive biological weapons program, and has more than twenty years' experience in development, management and supervision of high containment pathogen laboratories. He has extensive knowledge of the production of biological weapons—including anthrax and smallpox—and in the development of treatments of the diseases caused by certain biological weapons. Dr. Alibek has published more than 80 articles in classified journals on the development of new types of biological weapons and on medical aspects of biodefense.

Dr. Alibek defected to the United States from Russia in 1992 and has subsequently served as a consultant to numerous U.S. government agencies in the areas of biological weapons defense, and biological weapons nonproliferation. He has worked with the National Institutes of Health, testified extensively before the U.S. Congress on nonproliferation of biological weapons and recently authored Biohazard, published by Random House. Dr. Alibek is a frequent participant in national and international forums regarding the medical and scientific bases for biological weapons defense. I am confident that in the coming months and years Dr. Alibek will be recognized as a hero for his contributions to world peace. Please extend a warm welcome to Dr. Ken Alibek.